



## **708 - TUITION REIMBURSEMENT**

### **I. POLICY**

The Tuition Reimbursement Policy is intended to encourage employee development and improve work-related knowledge, skills, and abilities through the pursuit of educational programs leading to a college degree. The City's Tuition Reimbursement Policy is a benefit that is limited to available funds. While the City encourages employees to further their education, educational attainment does not guarantee promotion or transfer.

### **II. DEFINITIONS**

- A. Accredited Institution – Colleges or universities that are nationally accredited by the U.S. Department of Education or the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- B. Educational Assistance – Financial aid received from other sources, including but not limited to: non-City government agencies, organizations, businesses, or associations that award scholarships, internships, grants; and/or veterans' benefits (e.g., G. I. Bill).
- C. Performance Standards – Employees must have at least an overall performance standard of "meets" on their most recent performance evaluation.
- D. Reimbursable Expenses – Tuition related costs only. Textbooks, learning aids and materials, university fees, lab fees, technology fees, parking or activity fees are not reimbursable.

### **III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Regular full-time City employees, who have completed two (2) years of active service and currently meeting performance standards, are eligible to apply for tuition reimbursement.

Employees may pursue a degree or take individual courses at approved and accredited educational institutions under this program, provided the course of study is related to the employee's current position or a reasonable promotional objective within the City.

Employees are eligible for a maximum of twelve (12) semester hours or quarter hour equivalent reimbursement per fiscal year.

### **IV. RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **A. Human Resources**

Human Resources administers the tuition reimbursement program and is responsible for ensuring that courses submitted for reimbursement are in compliance with the policy.

B. Department Directors

Department Directors are responsible for approving tuition reimbursement applications, ensuring that submitted courses are relevant to the employee's position or a reasonable promotional objective, and determining that the courses will not interfere with the operations of the department.

C. Employees

Employees have the responsibility of initiating the tuition reimbursement process and complying with all terms as stated in this policy and the tuition agreement. Failure to do so may result in nonpayment by the City or forfeiture of the tuition reimbursement benefits.

V. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Employees must discuss and get approval from their Department Director to apply for tuition reimbursement.

1. Applications for tuition reimbursement shall be submitted to Human Resources using the City's Tuition Reimbursement Application Form.
2. Applications must be submitted no later than two (2) weeks prior to the official start date of the course(s). Applications submitted after the official start date of the course will be denied.
3. In order to receive tuition reimbursement for approved courses, copies of official grades and tuition receipts shall be submitted to Human Resources within thirty (30) calendar days following completion of the course, or immediately upon receipt if received from the accredited institution more than thirty (30) calendar days following completion of a course.
  - a. Official transcripts may be requested by Human Resources for confirmation.
  - b. Any fees associated with obtaining a transcript must be paid by the employee.
4. Employees shall disclose on the application any and all information relating to educational assistance received from any other source. Failure to disclose other educational assistance may result in one or more of the following:
  - a. Employee being responsible for repayment of tuition reimbursement to the City, either partially or in full; and/or
  - b. The employee being ineligible for tuition reimbursement in the future.
5. Subject to the availability of funds, applications for reimbursement shall be approved on a first come, first serve basis.

6. Tuition reimbursement is not guaranteed and the City reserves the right to reduce the amount of tuition reimbursement provided or to discontinue this program at any time.

## VI. REIMBURSEMENT

After the successful completion, the employee may be reimbursed for tuition as indicated below but shall not exceed the total cost of the course(s):

Undergraduate Level Course	\$100 per credit hour
Graduate Level Course	\$125 per credit hour

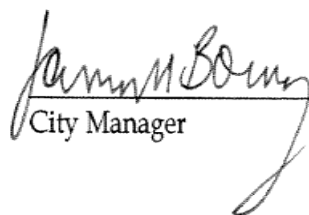
Employees must attain the grade of "C" or better for reimbursement for undergraduate work and the grade of "B" or better for graduate level courses. Courses taken on a pass/fail basis will be reimbursed only if the employee receives a passing grade.

The tuition will be paid initially by the employee. To receive reimbursement for an approved course, the employee must provide tuition receipts and evidence of the grade(s) received to Human Resources within thirty (30) days of the completion of the course(s), or immediately upon receipt if received from the accredited institution more than thirty (30) calendar days following completion of a course.

Employees, who leave the City's employment within one year of completing course work that was reimbursed through the tuition reimbursement program, with the exception of a reduction of force (RIF), will be required to repay all funds received in the last fiscal year in full. Repayments will be deducted from the employee's available paid personal leave (PPL) balance and/or the final paycheck (after payment of the federal minimum wage). If there are insufficient hours to cover the cost of the repayment, employees will be required to set up a payment plan with the Department of Finance. In addition, employees who leave the City's employment prior to receiving payment for requested tuition will forfeit payment of the requested funds.

*Supersedes/Amends: 708, 9/01/08*

Approved:

  
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City Manager